

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5653

As Passed Senate, March 3, 1995

Title: An act relating to investigations of public assistance fraud.

Brief Description: Transferring functions of the certified criminal justice agency within the department of social and health services to the office of the attorney general.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Gaspard, McDonald, Smith, Oke, Wojahn, Winsley, Fraser, McAuliffe, Loveland, Kohl, Spanel, Franklin, Snyder, Drew, Haugen, Hargrove, Bauer and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/10/95, 2/16/95 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 3/3/95, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5653 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Quigley, Chair; Wojahn, Vice Chair; C. Anderson, Deccio, Fairley, Franklin, Moyer, Winsley and Wood.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

Background: There is increasing concern about the state's ability to efficiently investigate public assistance fraud. Some believe that placing investigative responsibility outside of the Department of Social and Health Services would promote independence and increase effectiveness.

Summary of Bill: Statutory responsibility for investigation of public assistance fraud is transferred from the Department of Social and Health Services to the Office of the Attorney General.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 1995.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect January 1, 1996.

Testimony For: Independence of the welfare investigative unit is essential to program integrity.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Gaspard; Kathleen Mix, Greg Canova, Attorney General's Office; Jean Soliz, DSHS.

House Amendment(s): An Office of Inspector General is created in DSHS to combat fraud or abuse regarding public benefits. The Inspector General supervises investigations, informs the Secretary of DSHS about fraud prevention, and has the authority to investigate employees as well as recipients, and to recommend policy.